

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GE, GW

SUBJ: EARLY DEPARTURE OF FRG REPRESENTATIVES FROM LEIPZIG FAIR

1. WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER MEDIA HAVE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS WITHIN THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO THE PRECIPITOUS DEPARTURE FROM THE LEIPZIG FAIR OF FRG ECONOMICS MINISTER FRIDERICH, STATE SECRETARY ROHWEDDER AND FINANCE MINISTER FROM LOWER SAXONY KIEP. ACCORDING TO THESE ACCOUNTS, ALL THREE WEST GERMAN OFFICIALS ACCOMPANIED BY GUNTHER GAUS, HEAD OF THE FRG REPRESENTATION TO THE GDR, DEPARTED LEIPZIG IN THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 15 SHORTLY AFTER THE WEST GERMAN GUESTS HAD ARRIVED. FRIDERICH, WHO WAS THE OFFICIAL FRG REPRESENTATIVE TO THE FAIR, APPARENTLY DEPARTED SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR DEPARTURE WAS THE REFUSAL OF GDR AUTHORITIES TO RECONSIDER OR TO GIVE ANY REASON FOR THE REFUSAL OF VISAS OF THREE JOURNALISTS FROM THE

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DEUTSCHLANFUNK AND DEUTSCHE WELLE.

2. DURING THE SHORT VISIT OF THE FRG OFFICIALS TO THE FAIR, FRIDERICHs REPORTEDLY MET WITH THE GDR MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE SOELLE AND SOELLE'S DEPUTY BEHRENDT DURING WHICH SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST INCLUDING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE DISCUSSED. THE WEST GERMAN REPORTS QUOTED FRIDERICHs AS HAVING STATED: " I FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTEND A FAIR IN WHICH THE ECONOMY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC REPRESENTS THE SECOND LARGEST EXHIBITION (AFTER THE GDR ITSELF), BUT ABOUT WHICH PERMISSION TO REPORT BY THREE (OFFICIAL WEST GERMAN) CORRESPONDENTS IS NOT GIVEN." FRIDERICHs APPARENTLY ADDED THAT HE FELT HIS DEPARTURE WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF GDR'S REFUSAL TO GRANT THESE VISAS CONTRADICTED THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GDR AND THE FRG AND THE SIGNING OF THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI. HE CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE DENIAL OF ACCREDITATION TO THE THREE JOURNALISTS HAD "CAST A SHADOW OVER THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES."

3. THE NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ACCOUNT OF THE AFFAIR WAS CARRIED ON MARCH 16 IN TWO SEPARATE ARTICLES. ONE ARTICLE STATED THAT THE GDR AND FRG REPRESENTATIVES MET TO DISCUSS THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AT THE INVITATION OF FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER SOELLE. THE ARTICLE LISTS THE PARTICIPANTS BY NAME AND INCLUDES IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING, DR. MICHAEL KOHL, THE GDR REPRESENTATIVE IN BONN. THIS ARTICLE ENDS BY NOTING THAT FDR MINISTER FRIDERICHs HAS "IN THE MEANTIME" RETURNED TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. THE SECOND ARTICLE MERELY STATES THAT MR. GAUS MET WITH THE MFA OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR RELATIONS WITH THE FRG, AMBASSADOR SEIDEL, TO PROTEST THE EXCLUSION OF THE WEST GERMAN CORRESPONDENTS FROM THE FAIR. SEIDEL IS REPORTED TO HAVE "DECISIVELY REFUSED GAUS' PROTEST".

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE TALKED WITH OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE FRG REPRESENTATION AND THEY CAN AT THIS STAGE OFFER NO EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE LEIPZIG FAIR WAS CHOSEN BY GDR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OFFICIALS FOR RAISING SUCH A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. THE ISSUE HAS ITS ANTECEDENTS IN THE EXPLUSION OF SPIEGEL JOURNALIST MATTKE LAST DECEMBER AND A LONG HISTORY OF PROBLEMS OF JOURNALISTIC ACCREDITATION IN THE GDR FOR JOURNALISTS FROM THE FRG. THE FRG REPRESENTATION POINTS OUT THAT DEUTSCHLANDFUNK WAS REPRESENTED AT LAST YEAR'S FAIR ALTHOUGH THEY ARE LESS SURE THAT DEUTSCHE WELLE WAS. EVEN IF THE GDR REFUSAL TO ACCREDIT JOURNALISTS FROM THESE SAME

ORGANIZATION THIS YEAR REPRESENTS A HARDENING OF THE GDR LEADERSHIP'S LINE BEFORE THE SED PARTEITAG IN MAY AND THE FRG FEDERAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER, THE FRG REPRESENTATIVES CONTEND IT IS ONLY A PASSING PHENOMENON AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CHANGE IN COURSE IN THE LONG RUN IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES. WHILE THEY ADMIT THAT JOURNALIST ACCREDITATION HAS A SIGNIFICANCE FOR CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, THE FRG REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT INCLINED TO STRESS THIS ASPECT OF THE LEIPZIG AFFAIR AND SEE THE MATTER MAINLY IN THE CONTEXT OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS.

5. IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING EVENT WHICH HAS THE MAKINGS OF AN ACERBIC INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE GDR, THERE HAS BEEN ADDED ANOTHER THEME ALREADY PICKED UP IN WEST GERMAN NEWS MEDIA. THE SECOND THEME REPORTS THAT THE SED LEADERSHIP DURING ITS CUSTOMARY WALKTHROUGH OF THE FAIR ON SUNDAY, MARCH 14, VISITED THE EXHIBITIONS OF THE OTHER SOCIALIST STATES AND NEGLECTED ENTIRELY THE EXHIBITS FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES. NO CONCLUSIONS HAVE YET BEEN DRAWN AS TO THE REASON FOR THIS SECOND EVENT NOR HAS IT YET BEEN LINKED WITH THE VISA REFUSAL AS DELIBERATE GDR DISRESPECT TO WESTERN OFFICIALS. THE SEEDS OF SUCH AN INTERPRETATION, HOWEVER, ARE PRESENT.COOPER

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